



Relias Spotlight Series

July 2020

Greetings Providers,

Welcome back to the Optum Idaho **Relias Spotlight Series**— a series devoted to providing you with access to **free, easily accessible, and CEU-eligible** online education about topics that are of most importance to behavioral health providers, like you, across the state.

Depression is not a normal part of aging

There is a widespread assumption that depression is a normal part of growing older. However, research tells us that depressive disorders are not a function of aging. Though age-related changes such as loss, illness (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer), isolation, and increased awareness of mortality can contribute to older adults' risk of depression, the majority of older adults are not depressed.



Older adults with depression often don't get the help they need

While most older adults do not suffer from a depressive disorder, for those who do, symptoms often are misdiagnosed and undertreated. When emotional and physical symptoms that greatly impede older adults' ability to age well and maintain a satisfactory quality of life are assumed to be a natural response to illness or to life changes related to the aging process, an opportunity to help older adults find appropriate treatment is missed. It is not uncommon, then, for people to self-medicate, turning to alcohol or other drugs, and engaging in suicidal thoughts.

Treatment for depression is critical to older adults' health and well-being

Though forgetfulness, aches and pains, and changes in sleep and appetite can be a normal part of aging, they can also be symptoms of depression or anxiety. It's up to us, as providers, to educate ourselves so that we can recognize and respond to these signs, especially when older adults may be reluctant to admit their symptoms or ashamed to seek help. It is only then that we can successfully help older adults take the steps necessary to effectively prevent and treat depression and anxiety and support them in having as happy and healthy an aging experience as possible.

In [your Relias dashboard](#) is **an array of courses (outlined below)** designed to help you understand the unique experiences and needs of older adults so that you can most effectively support clients



in your practice. All courses are available completely for free and can be taken at your leisure during the month of July. Best of all— **many of these courses qualify for CEUs!**

- [Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults](#)
- [Advance Directives](#)
- [Anxiety Disorders Among Older Adults](#)
- [Assessing Substance Use Disorder in Older Adults](#)
- [Behavioral Health Issues in Older Adults](#)
- [Behavioral Health Issues in Older Adults for Paraprofessionals](#)



- [Depression in Older Adults: The Basics](#)
- [Managing Depression in Older Adults](#)
- [Treating Substance Use Disorders in Older Adults](#)

And remember, as you go about learning — that healthcare starts with self-care.

From all of us at Optum Idaho, thank you for all that you do for our members!

We wish you and your loved ones a safe and rejuvenating July,
The Optum Idaho Education and Training Team

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